

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 EB-07 COME-00 AGR-05 /040 W

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R 191316Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8825

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 0739

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJ: FOOD SUPPLIES IN VILNIUS

1. SUMMARY. DURING JANUARY 14-15 VISIT TO VILNIUS, EMBOFF CHECKED STATE STORES FOR MEAT AND PRODUCE SUPPLIES. IN THE MAIN STORES ON PR. LENINA AND OTHER MAJOR DOWNTOWN STREETS, QUANTITY AND QUALITY WAS GENERALLY HIGH, BUT CAUSTIC COMMENTS BY SOME LOCAL CITIZENS GAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE TO THE APPARENT SUFFICIENCY. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST-QUALITY BEEF WAS WIDELY AVAILABLE, AT 1.90 RUBLES PER KILO. AT SOME STORES, A LESSER GRADE SOLD FOR 1.80 R. PORK, PRICED AT 2 R., WAS OFFERED AT ALL STORES. PORK FAT QUANTITIES WERE PLENTIFUL, AND PRICES RANGED FROM 2.50 R. PER KILO TO 1.90 R. AND 1.70 R. FOR LESSER QUALITY. HAM WAS AVAILABLE AT ONE STORE ON PR. LENINA IN TWO GRADES, PRICED AT 3.50 R. AND 3.20 R. LARGE QUANTITIES OF KOLBASA WERE SOLD IN EVERY MEAT STORE VISITED, AT PRICES RANGING FROM 3.20 R. TO 2 R. PER KILO. FISH STORES OFFERED FORZEN, SMOKED AND CANNED VARIETIES, WITH FIRST QUALITY CANNED SARDINES COMMANDING A PRICE OF 2 R. PER KILO. SECOND QUALITY EGGS WERE AVAILABLE IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES AT 95 KOPECKS. GOOD-LOOKING PLUMP CHICKENS AVAILABLE AT ONLY ONE STORE SOLD FOR 2.50 R. PER KILO.

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3. AT THE PRINCIPAL MEAT STORE ON PR. LENINA,

BACON BROUGHT 2 R. PER KILO, MUTTON 1.80 R., KIDNEYS 1.30 R., LIVER 1 R., BEEF LOAF 3.30 R., AND PORK LOAF 3.10 R. ALL STOARES SURVEYED HAD GOOD SUPPLIES OF CHEESE, WITH PRICES RANGING FROM 2.90 R. TO 1.70 R. PER KILO. GOOD SIZED LOAVES OF WHITE BREAD SOLD FOR 20 K., BROWN BREAD FOR 13 K., AND BIG BLACK LOAVES FOR 28 K.

4. STATE PRODUCE STORES IN VILNIUS SOLD ONIONS FOR 70 K. PER KILO, GREEN ONIONS FOR 1 R., CABBAGE FOR 14 K., BAD-LOOKING CARROTS FOR 14 K., OLD, SMALL POTATOES FOR 10 K., BEETS FOR 12 K., AND SPONGY APPLES FOR 1 R. BETTER GEORGIAN APPLES COMMAND UP TO 2.50 R. PER KILO WHEN AVAILABLEAT

5. COMMENT. WE DISCUSSED THE MEAT AND PRODUCT SITUATION WITH SEVERAL VILNIUS RESIDENTS, WHO CONFIRMED OUR IMPRESSION THAT THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES WERE GENERALLY ADEQUATE. "JUST WAIT, THOUGH," ONE WOMAN CAUTIONED. "IF THINGS GET TOUGH IN MOSCOW, YOU'LL SEE A LOT OF EMPTY SHELVES AROUND HERE." DIVERTING FOOD, PARTICULARLY MEAT, IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE WE INTERVIEWED REGARD AS A DISTINCT FUTURE POSSIBILITY. STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUPPLIES, FOODS, MEATS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW00739
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760019-0901
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760144/aaaabnfc.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOOD SUPPLIES IN VILNIUS
TAGS: PINT, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006